

**TO COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL BYLAWS, MANUAL OF PROCEDURE AND RITUAL**  
**This committee meets at 1:30 p.m., Sunday, August 10**

Chairman: Harold J. Roesch, Past Commander-in-Chief, Post 3219, VA  
Vice Chairman: Eric M. Dudash, Post 3128, AL  
Vice Chairman: Kevin C. Jones, Post 7356, MO

This committee considers all proposed amendments to the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure, as well as resolutions having any bearing upon the National Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. It makes recommendations to the Convention for approval or disapproval of proposed amendments that may be adopted only in accordance with sections 1401, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure. It also considers resolutions or other proposals pertaining to changes in the VFW Ritual and makes recommendations thereon.

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**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO NATIONAL BYLAWS**

**B-1**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group  
Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE I – MEMBERS**

**Sec. 111 – Life Members.**

Amend Sec. 111 - Life Members., National Bylaws, under (b), in the third paragraph, by replacing the last sentence with the following:

“An individual who is discharged from the organization by reason of disciplinary action or is eligible but wishes to voluntarily resign their membership shall forfeit their life membership and will not be entitled to any refund of fees paid.”

**B-2**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group  
Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

**ARTICLE II – POSTS**

**Sec. 216 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.**

Amend Sec. 216 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees., National Bylaws, under (b), by replacing “Service Officer” with “Benefits Advisor”.

**B-3**

Proposed by Department of Wisconsin

**ARTICLE II – POSTS**

**Sec. 216 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.**

Amend Sec. 216 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees., National Bylaws, under (b), by adding “and Surgeon” after “Service Officer”.

Under (c), remove “Surgeon”.

#### **B-4**

Proposed by Department of California

#### **ARTICLE II – POSTS**

##### **Sec. 216 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.**

Amend Sec. 216 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees., National Bylaws, under (c), by replacing the current language with the following:

“Depending on what Post Bylaws state, a post may elect, or a Post Commander may appoint a Judge Advocate, Surgeon, Officer of the Day, and/or Guard.”

#### **B-5**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE II – POSTS**

##### **Sec. 220 – Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members.**

Amend Sec. 220 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members., National Bylaws, under **Removal**, in the first paragraph, by adding the following as a second sentence:

“If elected officers and committee members removed in accordance with this section hold more than one elected office and there is cause to remove them from additional offices, each removal shall be treated separately by issuance of a unique Special Order.”

#### **B-6**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS**

##### **Sec. 416 – Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees.**

Amend Sec. 416 - Elected and Appointed Officers; Chairmen and Committees., National Bylaws, under (b), by replacing “Service Officer” with “Benefits Advisor”.

#### **B-7**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS**

##### **Sec. 420 – Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members.**

Amend Sec. 420 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members., National Bylaws, under **Removal**, in the first paragraph, by adding the following as a second sentence:

“If elected officers and committee members removed in accordance with this section hold more than one elected office and there is cause to remove them from additional offices, each removal shall be treated separately by issuance of a unique Special Order.”

## **B-8**

Proposed by Department of Illinois

### **ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS**

#### **Sec. 421 – Voting.**

Amend Sec. 421 - Voting., National Bylaws, in the first paragraph, first sentence, by removing “, except delegates elected by the Posts,”.

In the first paragraph, at the end of the second sentence, add “when a roll call vote is held.”

## **B-9**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

### **ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS**

#### **Sec. 520 – Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers.**

Amend Sec. 520 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers., National Bylaws, under **Removal**, in the first paragraph, by adding the following as a second sentence:

“If elected officers and committee members removed in accordance with this section hold more than one elected office and there is cause to remove them from additional offices, each removal shall be treated separately by issuance of a unique Special Order.”

## **B-10**

Proposed by Department of Illinois

### **ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS**

#### **Sec. 521 – Voting.**

Amend Sec. 521 - Voting., National Bylaws, in the first sentence, by removing “, except delegates elected by the Posts,”.

At the end of the second sentence, add “when a roll call vote is held.”

## **B-11**

Proposed by Department of Wisconsin

### **ARTICLE V – DEPARTMENTS**

#### **Sec. 522 – Council of Administration-Composition, Powers and Duties.**

Amend Sec. 522 - Council of Administration-Composition, Powers and Duties., National Bylaws, under (a), by adding the following after the 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence:

“If the immediate Past Department Commander is elected to a consecutive term as the Department Commander, or is deceased, the next Immediate Past Department Commander shall serve on the Council of Administration.”

## **B-12**

Proposed by Department of Wisconsin

### **ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL**

#### **Sec. 615 – Eligibility to Office.**

Amend Sec. 615 - Eligibility to Office., National Bylaws, by adding the following to the section:

“No Past Commander-in-Chief shall be eligible for appointment to a paid National position or office within the organization until a minimum of five (5) years has elapsed since their official departure date as the Commander-in-Chief. A Past Commander-in-Chief remains eligible to hold all elected positions within the organization for which they are otherwise eligible.”

## **B-13**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

### **ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL**

#### **Sec. 619 – National Committees.**

Amend Sec. 619 - National Committees., National Bylaws, under (c)(2), in the 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence, by removing “monthly”.

## **B-14**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

### **ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL**

#### **Sec. 620 – Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers.**

Amend Sec. 620 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members and Salaried Officers., National Bylaws, under **Removal**, in the second paragraph, by adding the following as a second sentence:

“If elected officers and committee members removed in accordance with this section hold more than one elected office and there is cause to remove them from additional offices, each removal shall be treated separately by issuance of a unique Special Order.”

## **B-15**

Proposed by Department of Illinois

### **ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL**

#### **Sec. 621 – Voting.**

Amend Sec. 621 - Voting., National Bylaws, in the first sentence, by removing “, except delegates elected by the Posts,”.

At the end of the second sentence, add “when a roll call vote is held.”

## **B-16**

Proposed by Department of Illinois

### **ARTICLE VI – NATIONAL**

#### **Sec. 622 – National Council of Administration-Composition, Powers and Duties.**

Amend Sec. 622 - National Council of Administration-Composition, Powers and Duties., National Bylaws, under (b)(12), in the second sentence by replacing “15” with “16”.

In the last sentence, add “National” before “Commander-in-Chief” and remove “regular” from the end of the sentence.

## **B-17**

Proposed by Department of Wyoming

### **ARTICLE IX - DISCIPLINE**

#### **Sec. 903 – Procedure for Disciplinary Actions.**

Amend Sec. 903 - Procedure for Disciplinary Actions., National Bylaws, under (a), by adding the following after 3.:

"4. If a VFW Member has been criminally charged with a felony crime and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) or Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Auxiliary, to include National, Department, District or Post, has been named as the victim in the criminal complaint, the charged VFW members membership can be temporarily suspended, pending outcome of the criminal proceeding. The VFW member should be notified in writing by certified mail. The Commander-in-Chief or Department Commander has the authority to initiate suspension and should notify the National Adjutant within five (5) business days of suspending the VFW member. Once the criminal proceedings have concluded, if the VFW member is found not guilty, their membership will immediately be reinstated and should be notified in writing within five (5) business days. If the member is found guilty, the charging authority should initiate disciplinary action as listed in Sec. 903 and the temporary suspension will continue until the outcome of the disciplinary process."

## **B-18**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

### **ARTICLE IX – DISCIPLINE**

#### **Sec. 908 – Administrative Actions.**

Amend Sec. 908 - Administrative Actions., National Bylaws, by adding the following as the last paragraph:

“In the event a member or former member sentenced is declared deceased prior to having served at least five years of the pertinent sentence, the Commander-in-Chief shall have the authority, at their sole discretion, to issue a pardon or commute the sentence. Upon a written request submitted by any interested party or initiated independently by the Commander-in-Chief any such pardon or commuted sentence shall only have the effect of restoring the deceased member’s good standing for historical and ceremonial purposes.”

## **B-19**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

### **ARTICLE XIII**

Amend Article XIII, National Bylaws, by adding the following as the new Article:

#### **“Article XIII – National VFW Riders**

##### **Sec. 1301 – Formation**

- (a) The National VFW Riders is a membership association separately constituted as a subordinate unit chartered by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Such association shall be governed by and subject to the jurisdiction of the National Convention of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration, and shall be governed by and subject to jurisdiction of the respective Department Convention, Commander and Council of Administration or Post.
- (b) The National VFW Riders shall be governed by such Bylaws and Ritual as may be adopted by it, and by the lawful orders issued by its National Officers, provided such Bylaws, Ritual and Orders do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or the lawful orders or directives of the National Convention, the Commander-in-Chief or the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.
- (c) The National VFW Riders may issue charters to subordinate chapters, provided that the establishment of such chapter shall have been approved by the respective Department or Post of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and subject to its control. Formation, control and disbandment of National VFW Riders chapters, as well as suspension or cancellation of charters, shall be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

##### **Sec. 1302 - Eligibility.**

Eligibility for membership in the National VFW Riders shall be limited to those members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States who have met the requirements as outlined in the National VFW Riders Bylaws and have been approved for membership by a majority vote of the members present and voting at a meeting of a chapter. Application for membership and certification thereof will be in the manner prescribed in the Manual of Procedure.

##### **Sec. 1303 - Bylaws, Ritual.**

The National VFW Riders may adopt such Bylaws and Ritual as are deemed necessary and may authorize subordinate chapters to adopt Bylaws. In the event any part of the Bylaws and Ritual so adopted are inconsistent with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws, Manual of Procedure or Ritual of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, or the Bylaws, Rules and Regulations and Procedures of the respective Department or Post, such part shall be considered null and void.

## **Sec. 1304 - Incorporation.**

- (a) The National VFW Riders is authorized to incorporate under appropriate not for profit corporation laws, provide such incorporation, and the Articles of Incorporation and any amendments thereto, are reviewed and approved by the Commander-in-Chief and approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the VFW Riders National Convention and provided further that the Articles of Incorporation include those provisions specified in Section 708 the Manual of Procedure. Failure to comply with these provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the charter.
- (b) The National VFW Riders, by duly approved amendments to its Bylaws, authorize subordinate chapters to incorporate under appropriate not for profit corporation laws and may adopt such Rules and Regulations as are appropriate concerning such incorporation, provided that the respective Department or unit of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States approves such incorporation, which approval shall be in the same manner as for the initial formation of a subordinate chapter, and approves the Articles of Incorporation and any amendments thereto and, provided further, that the Articles of Incorporation of any such corporation include the provisions specified in Section 708 of the Manual of Procedure. Should any state law prohibit the provisions specified in the Manual of Procedure for Articles of Incorporation, it shall be permissible to change the provisions sufficiently to conform to state law so long as the change is not inconsistent with the purposes of the Manual of Procedure provision. Failure to comply with those provisions will result in suspension or revocation of the charter.

(End of Article XIII)"

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

### **M-1**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE I – MEMBERS**

##### **Sec. 108 – Challenging Members Eligibility.**

Amend Sec. 108 - Challenging Members Eligibility., Manual of Procedure, by adding the following at the beginning of the second paragraph:

“A Department Commander may initiate a challenge of eligibility of any member in their respective Department after the member has been properly notified in writing by certified or registered mail addressed to the member’s last known address, at which time they shall have fifteen (15) days to provide proof of eligibility to the Department Commander for disposition.”

Remove third paragraph.

### **M-2**

Proposed by Department of Virginia

#### **ARTICLE II – POSTS**

##### **Sec. 218 – Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations.**

Amend Sec. 218 - Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations., Manual of Procedure, under (a)(6)d., no. 1., by adding the following at the end of the sentence:

“at least until that record is successfully processed into the VFW National Membership Database (e.g. OMS).”

### **M-3**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE II – POSTS**

##### **Sec. 218 – Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations.**

Amend Sec. 218 - Officers and Chairmen, Duties and Obligations., Manual of Procedure, under (a)(12), by replacing with the following:

“(12) **Benefits Advisor.** The Post Benefits Advisor shall advise members of the Post, their family members and survivors of benefits and services that are available in the local community such as homeless services, employment opportunities, and companies that offer discounted goods or services to veterans. The Post Benefits Advisor shall direct individuals seeking Federal benefits assistance to the Department Service Officer. The work of a Post Benefits Advisor shall be performed in accordance with the instructions contained in the VFW Guide for Post Benefits Advisor under the general supervision of the Post Commander. The Post Benefits Advisor shall perform such other duties as may be incident to the office and as may from time to time be required by the laws and usages of this organization or lawful orders from proper authority.”



#### **M-4**

Proposed by Department of Georgia

#### **ARTICLE II – POSTS**

#### **Sec. 222 – Delegates, District Convention & Meetings, Department and National Conventions.**

Amend Sec. 222 - Delegates, District Convention & Meetings, Department and National Conventions., Manual of Procedure, by adding the following as a new paragraph:

“Only in the event a Post is left without at least one elected delegate or alternate during the year, the Post shall elect replacement delegates, according to delegate strength, at the next Regular or Special Meeting.”

#### **M-5**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS**

#### **Sec. 418 – Officers: Duties and Obligations.**

Amend Sec. 418 - Officers: Duties and Obligations., Manual of Procedure, under (a)(14), by replacing with the following:

“(14) **Benefits Advisor.** The District Benefits Advisor shall assist Post Benefits Advisor.”

#### **M-6**

Proposed by Department of Oklahoma

#### **ARTICLE IV – DISTRICTS**

#### **Sec. 420 – Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members.**

Amend Sec. 420 - Vacancies and Removal of Elected Officers or Committee Members., Manual of Procedure, under **Vacancies**, by moving the entire 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph and adding it after the last sentence under **Removal – District** to read:

“A copy of the notice shall be provided to the Department Commander at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting. The District, at the next regular or special meeting, may by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting declare vacant the position of any an elected officer or elected committee member who may have:

1. Absented themselves from two (2) consecutive meetings.
2. Failed to fulfill the duties of office specified in Section 418 of the Bylaws and Manual of Procedure.

## **M-7**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group  
Proposed by the Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief

### **ARTICLE VIII – UNIFORMS, BADGES, ETC.**

#### **Sec. 803 – Manufacture and Use of Seals, Emblems, Badges, Insignia and Uniforms.**

Amend Sec. 803 – Manufacture and Use of Seals, Emblems, Badges, Insignia and Uniforms., Manual of Procedure, by adding the following after the section titled **Cap**:

**“Alternative Cap.** A baseball-style cap, black in color, lettered with VFW initials, Post numerals, state, rank of office (when applicable), Veterans of Foreign Wars and bearing the Cross of Malta may be worn by members other than officers during meetings of the Post and District. Lettering on each cap shall be in gold.

The trim on the front of the bill shall be either gold, green, red, or silver, corresponding to the official braid colors for the respective organizational echelon.

The baseball-style cap shall be an alternative to, but not a replacement for the regulation overseas cap and shall not be worn in place of the regulation cap at formal ceremonies, when in business attire, or at events where the regulation cap is prescribed.”

## **M-8**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group  
Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

### **ARTICLE X – RULES OF ORDER**

#### **Sec. 1004 – Order of Business-Posts.**

Amend Sec. 1004 - Order of Business-Posts., Manual of Procedure, under (a)12, by replacing “Service Officer” with “Benefits Advisor”.

Under (b)7, replace “Service Officer” with “Benefits Advisor”.

## **M-9**

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group  
Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

### **ARTICLE XIII**

Amend Article XIII, Manual of Procedure, by adding the following as the new Article:

#### **“Article XIII – National VFW Riders**

##### **Sec. 1301 - Formation.**

###### **(a) Formation.**

- (1) **Chapters.** Chapters may be formed and chartered in accordance with the National Bylaws of the VFW Riders provided no chapter shall be formed by less than eight (8) members in good standing of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States or its Auxiliary, and, provided further that no chapter shall be chartered unless the Post with which such chapter is to be affiliated has consented to the chartering thereof. Consent shall require two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and

voting at a regular or special meeting, provided that Post members are given written notice that a vote will take place, such notice to be given the entire membership in writing at least ten (10) days prior to the regular or special meeting called for the aforementioned purpose.

Each chapter shall be assigned a number by the VFW Riders.

Each chapter shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Post with which it is affiliated. It shall also be subject to the jurisdiction of the Department Convention, Council of Administration and Commander of its respective Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States with respect to matters within their authority.

Each chapter shall function in accordance with the National Bylaws, Ritual and lawful orders issued by National and Department officers of the VFW Riders, provided they do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the Bylaws of the Department in which it is situated or the Post with which it is affiliated or lawful orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief, the National or Department Council of Administration or Department Commander.

- (2) **Department Chapters.** Department Chapters may be formed by a vote of the Department Convention. Each Department Unit of the VFW Riders shall be governed by and under the jurisdiction of the Convention, Council of Administration, and Commander of its respective Department of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, who shall decide questions of law and usage for the Department Unit subject to an appeal to the Commander-in-Chief or National Council of Administration; but the Department Chapter shall function in accordance with the National Bylaws and Ritual of the VFW Riders and lawful orders issued by National and Department officers thereof, provided they do not conflict with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and Bylaws of the Department with which the Department Chapter is affiliated or the lawful orders issued by the Commander-in-Chief and/or National or Department Council of Administration and the Department Commander.

(b) **Suspension and Discontinuance.**

- (1) The Commander-in-Chief or National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may suspend the National Charter of the VFW Riders for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, for conduct of the organization, its Convention, National Officers or National Council of Administration which may be detrimental to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Upon recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief, the National Council of Administration may, by two-thirds (2/3) vote, cancel and revoke the charter of the VFW Riders, provided written notice of such recommendation is given to the National Commander at least ten (10) days prior to any National Council action and the National Commander of the VFW Riders or their designee has been afforded an opportunity to appear before the National Council and be heard concerning such recommendation.
- (2) The Commander-in-Chief may direct the suspension, for a period not to exceed sixty (60) days, or the cancellation of the charter of any subordinate chapter of the VFW Riders, upon recommendation of the Commander of the Department wherein such chapter is located, when it is shown the conduct of officers or members

thereof may be detrimental to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

- (3) **Disbanding of Chapter by a Post.** A Post may, by vote of eighty percent of its members present and voting at a meeting following a written notice mailed or delivered to each member of the Post in good standing at least ten (10) days before said meeting, vote to request cancellation of the charter of its chapter. The notice must state the contemplated action and the reason therefor. If the Post votes to request cancellation of the charter of its chapter, it shall certify the action in writing and forward same to the Department Commander who shall forward it to the Commander-in-Chief with their recommendations. If the Commander-in-Chief believes that it is in the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to do so, the Commander-in-Chief shall direct the National Commander of the VFW Riders to cancel the charter of the chapter.

- (4) **Change of Post Affiliation.** For a chapter to change affiliation, it must first receive consent from two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members of the Post to which it is now affiliated present and voting at a regular or special meeting providing the Post members are given written notice that a vote will take place, such notice to be given the entire membership in writing at least ten (10) days prior to the regular or special meeting called for the aforementioned purpose.

The new Post to which the chapter will be affiliated must provide consent by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members present and voting at a regular or special meeting, providing the Post members are given written notice that a vote will take place, such notice to be given the entire membership in writing at least ten (10) days prior to the regular or special meeting called for the aforementioned purpose.

The change of affiliation then must be approved by the Department Commander, as well as the National Commander of the VFW Riders.

Once approval has been given, all records and properties of the chapter will then be transferred with the chapter to the new Post of affiliation.

- (5) While the charter of the National Organization of the VFW Riders , or a subordinate chapter thereof, is suspended said chapter shall not be permitted to function and the officers thereof shall be without authority; provided, however, it or its officers shall have the right to appeal to the Commander-in-Chief to lift the suspension; and in the case of suspension of the charter of the National Organization, an appeal may be made to the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

- (c) **Suspension of Officers.** The officers (elected and appointed) of the VFW Riders or of subordinate chapters thereof may be suspended by action of the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, subject to review by the National Council of Administration. While so suspended, the offending officer or officers of the VFW Riders shall be without authority, and if it is found that the conduct of an officer or officers thereof is detrimental to the best interest of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, the National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may order the removal of such officer or officers.

- (d) **Disposition of Property.** In the event of a surrender, cancellation or forfeiture of a charter of a subordinate chapter of the VFW Riders, all official records, money and other property shall be surrendered to such officer or officers as is provided in the National Bylaws and Ritual of the VFW Riders.

(e) **Reports.**

- (1) The National Commander of the VFW Riders shall, within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Commander-in-Chief an itemized report of the financial and membership status of the National Organization of the VFW Riders for their information and for submission by the Commander-in-Chief to the National Council of Administration.
- (2) The Department Commander of the VFW Riders shall within thirty (30) days after induction into office, submit to the Department Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States an itemized report of the financial and membership status of the Department Chapter of the VFW Riders for their information and for submission by the Commander to the Department Council of Administration.

- (f) **Liaison.** The Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States may appoint a committee who shall meet with a committee appointed by the National Commander of the VFW Riders. This combined committee when appointed shall meet at intervals between National Conventions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to consider all matters affecting the welfare of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States insofar as the activities of the VFW Riders are concerned. The purpose of this committee shall be to coordinate the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the activities of the VFW Riders so that there shall be full compliance with the Congressional Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and best interest of both the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the VFW Riders are furthered.

**Sec. 1302 - Eligibility.**

An application for membership in the VFW Riders must be accompanied by a certificate verifying satisfaction of the requirements for membership specified in the VFW Riders Bylaws. The certificate shall bear the endorsement of the Post Commander attested by the Post Adjutant.

**Sec. 1303 - Bylaws, Ritual.** (See Section 1303 of the Bylaws)

**Sec. 1304 - Incorporation.**

- (a) The Articles of Incorporation of the National VFW Riders, should it incorporate, and any amendments thereto, must have the following provisions:
- (1) The active and voting membership of this corporation shall, at all times, consist of and be confined to the active membership in good standing of the VFW Riders.
  - (2) This incorporated organization shall be and remain under the jurisdiction of the National Convention, Commander-in-Chief and National Council of Administration of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and subject to its charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure and the Bylaws and Ritual of the VFW Riders.
  - (3) In the event of a dissolution of this corporation, or the simultaneous dissolution of this corporation and the forfeiture of the charter issued to it by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, title to all of the assets shall pass to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States to be disposed of according to its Bylaws. At no time shall the assets of the corporation be distributed among the individual members thereof.
  - (4) The Articles shall, in addition, contain a provision specifically excluding from the

powers of the corporation the power to own or hold real property.

- (b) The Articles of Incorporation of any Department Chapter should it incorporate, and any amendments thereto, must include the following provisions:

(1) The active and voting membership of this corporation shall, at all times, consist of and be confined to the active membership in good standing of the (Department Chapter, VFW Riders, Department of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) or (Chapter, VFW Riders, Post \_\_\_\_\_, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States).

(2) This incorporated organization shall be and at all times remain under the jurisdiction of the National Convention, National Commander and National Council of Administration of the VFW Riders, the Commander-in-Chief of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and the (Department of \_\_\_\_\_, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) or (Post No. \_\_\_\_\_, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States) and subject to the Bylaws and Ritual of the VFW Riders and the Charter, Bylaws and Manual of Procedure of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

(3) In the event of a dissolution of this corporation or the simultaneous dissolution this corporation and loss or forfeiture of its charter, title to all assets shall pass to the Department Chapter of the VFW Riders to be disposed of according to the Bylaws. At no time shall the assets of this corporation be distributed among the individual members thereof.

(4) The Articles shall, in addition, contain a provision specifically excluding from the powers of the corporation the power to own or hold real property.

(End of Article XIII)"

## PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RITUAL

### R-1

(Page 2)

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **RITUAL**

#### **GENERAL RULES**

Amend Chapter Title - General Rules, Ritual, in the first sentence, by adding "National Council of Administration or the" before "National Convention."

Remove No. 4 and renumber the current Nos. 5 - 13 as 4 - 12.

### R-2

(Page 14)

Proposed by Department of California

#### **RITUAL**

#### **OPENING POST CEREMONIES**

Amend Chapter Title - Opening Post Ceremonies, Ritual, under **PRAYER**, next to **Chaplain**, by replacing the section with the following:

**"Chaplain:** Let us bow our heads. O, Sovereign Ruler of the Universe who is God of Peace, without You our efforts are in vain. Continue Your blessings upon us and our families and guide us during our deliberations. We ask You O God, to bless the dependents of our departed comrades, and to comfort all who gave their loved ones to our nation's cause. Bless and strengthen the sick, the needy, and the afflicted. Bless the children, families, and staff of our National Home and help us to fulfill our duty toward them. Continue Your favor upon our order and help us to practice the spirit of true comradeship, both in our councils, and with the world at large. Enable us to better the community in which we live through our devotion to duty as citizens. We now have a moment of silent prayer for our departed comrades and for those missing in action and those held as prisoners of war.

(Short pause.)

These and all other necessary blessings we ask of You, Mighty Ruler of the Universe. Amen.

(All respond – Amen. Chaplain takes their regular station.)

### **R-3**

(Pages 18 and 19)

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **RITUAL**

#### **ORDER OF BUSINESS – Traditional (Post) and Contemporary (Post)**

Amend Chapter Title - Order of Business - Traditional (Post), Ritual, No. 12, by replacing “Service Officer” with “Benefits Advisor.”

Amend Chapter Title - Order of Business - Contemporary (Post), Ritual, No. 7, by replacing “Service Officer” with “Benefits Advisor”.

### **R-4**

(Page 20)

Proposed by Department of California

#### **RITUAL**

#### **CLOSING CEREMONIES (Post)**

Amend Chapter Title - Closing Ceremonies (Post), Ritual, under **PRAYER**, next to **Chaplain**, by replacing the section with the following:

**“Chaplain:** Almighty God, the hour has come when we must part.

We commit ourselves to Your care. You who are our strong tower of defense and our protection, grant that in life's battles we may be strong and brave, living such lives of stainless integrity so that we reflect honor upon our country and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and glorify Your great and Holy Name.

May Your good providence shield us from all harm, watch over those who even now guard the gates of freedom, and bring us together again in true comradeship and peace. Amen.

(All respond – Amen.)”

### **R-5**

(Page 22)

Proposed by Department of California

#### **RITUAL**

#### **INITIATION CEREMONY (Brief Form)**

Amend Chapter Title - Initiation Ceremony (Brief Form), Ritual, under **PRAYER**, next to **Chaplain**, by replacing the section with the following:

**“Chaplain:** Almighty God, we ask Your blessing upon these our comrades who now become fellow members. May the tender ties formed amid the privations and dangers of war be drawn closer by our fellowship in this order. May our union foster among us an enduring comradeship and a spirit of mutual loyalty and support in every walk of life.



May these comrades dedicate and devote their lives to Your service as You spared them during the perils of wars. Grant that hereafter they may be spared for a useful life to the honor and glory of Your Holy Name. Amen.

(All respond – Amen.)”

#### **R-6**

(Page 29)

Proposed by Department of California

#### **RITUAL**

#### **CEREMONIAL INITIATION**

Amend Chapter Title – Ceremonial Initiation, Ritual, under **PRAYER**, next to **Chaplain**, by replacing the section with the following:

“**Chaplain:** Almighty God, we ask Your blessing upon our comrades who now become fellow members.

May the tender ties formed amid the privations and dangers of war be drawn closer by our fellowship in this order.

May our union foster among us an enduring comradeship and a spirit of mutual loyalty and support in every walk of life.

May these comrades dedicate and devote their lives to Your service as You spared them during the perils of war. Grant that hereafter they may be spared for a useful life to the honor and glory of Your Holy Name. Amen.

(All respond – Amen.)”

#### **R-7**

(Page 47)

Proposed by Department of California

#### **RITUAL**

#### **INSTITUTING NEW POST**

Amend Chapter Title - Instituting New Post, Ritual, under the first **PRAYER**, next to **Chaplain**, by replacing the section with the following:

“**Chaplain:** Almighty God, we ask Your blessing upon these our comrades who now become fellow members. May the tender ties formed amid the privations and dangers of war be drawn closer by our fellowship in this order. May our union foster among us an enduring comradeship and a spirit of mutual loyalty and support in every walk of life. May these comrades dedicate and devote their lives to Your service as You spared them during the perils of war. Grant that hereafter they may be spared for a useful life, to the honor and glory of Your Holy Name. Amen.

(All respond—Amen.)”

Under the second **PRAYER**, next to **Acting Chaplain**, replace the section with the following:

**“Acting Chaplain:** Almighty God, our guidance and Divine Protector, give Your blessings upon these, our Comrades, who now become fellow officers. We ask You O Lord, who is ever present among us, grant wisdom to them, so that in their deliberations they continue to favor You, our glorious Country, and to better our organization. May Your strength sustain them. May Your power preserve them. May Your hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.”

#### **R-8**

(Page 56)

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **RITUAL**

#### **INSTALLATION OF POST OFFICERS**

Amend Chapter Title - Installation of Post Officers, Ritual, under the 6<sup>th</sup> **Installing Officer**, in the first paragraph, at the end of the last sentence, by replacing “officers-elect” with “elected and appointed officers.”

In the last paragraph, 1<sup>st</sup> sentence, remove “in a semi-circle”.

In the last paragraph, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence, replace “semi-circle” with “the officers to be installed.”

In the last paragraph, 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence, replace “Officers elect” with “Elected and appointed”.

Under **Retiring Commander or Aide**, in the first paragraph, replace “officers elect” with “elected and appointed officers”.

Under the last **Installing Officer** before **OFFICERS’ OBLIGATION**, in the first paragraph, replace “Officers-elect” with “Elected and appointed officers”.

#### **R-9**

(Page 56)

Proposed by Department of California

#### **RITUAL**

#### **INSTALLATION OF POST OFFICERS**

Amend Chapter Title - Installation of Post Officers, Ritual, under **PRAYER**, next to **Retiring or Acting Chaplain**, by replacing the section with the following:

**“Retiring or Acting Chaplain:** Almighty God, our guidance and Divine Protector, give Your blessings upon these, our Comrades, who now become fellow officers. We ask You, O Lord, who is ever present amongst us, grant wisdom to them, so that in their deliberations they continue to favor You, our glorious Country, and to better our organization.

May Your strength sustain them. May Your power preserve them. May Your hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.”

#### **R-10**

(Page 60)

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **RITUAL**

#### **INSTALLATION OF DISTRICT OFFICERS**

Amend Chapter Title - Installation of District Officers, Ritual, under the 6<sup>th</sup> **Installing Officer**, in the first paragraph, at the end of the last sentence, by replacing “officers-elect” with “elected and appointed officers.”

In the last paragraph, 1<sup>st</sup> sentence, remove “in a semi-circle”.

In the last paragraph, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence, replace “semi-circle” with “officers to be installed.”

In the last paragraph, 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence, replace “Officers elect” with “Elected and appointed officers”.

Under **Retiring Commander or Aide**, in the first paragraph, replace “officers elect” with “elected and appointed officers”.

Under the last **Installing Officer**, before **OFFICERS’ OBLIGATION**, in the first paragraph, replace “Officers-elect” with “Elected and appointed officers”.

#### **R-11**

(Page 65)

Recommended by National Bylaws Study Group

Proposed by the Commander-in-Chief

#### **RITUAL**

#### **INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS (National or Department)**

Amend Chapter Title - Installation of Officers (National or Department), Ritual, under the 9<sup>th</sup> **Installing Officer**, in the first paragraph, by replacing “officers-elect” with “elected and appointed officers”.

Under **Aide-de-Camp**, replace “officers-elect” throughout this section with “elected and appointed officers”.

Under the last **Installing Officer**, before **OFFICERS’ OBLIGATION**, in the first sentence, replace “Officers-elect” with “Elected and appointed officers”.

## **R-12**

(Page 65)

Proposed by Department of California

### **RITUAL**

#### **INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS (National or Department)**

Amend Chapter Title – Installation of Officers (National or Department), Ritual, under **PRAYER**, next to **Retiring or Acting Chaplain**, by replacing the section with the following:

**“Retiring or Acting Chaplain:** Almighty God, our guidance and Divine Protector, give Your blessings upon these, our Comrades, who now become fellow officers. We ask You, O Lord, who is ever present amongst us, grant wisdom to them, so that in their deliberations they continue to favor You, our glorious Country, and to better our organization. May Your strength sustain them. May Your power preserve them. May Your hand protect them in the faithful and fruitful performance of their duties. Amen.”

## **R-13**

(Page 79)

Proposed by Department of California

### **RITUAL**

#### **MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE**

Amend Chapter Title - Memorial Day Service, Ritual, next to **Chaplain**, by replacing the section with the following:

**“Chaplain:** Almighty God. In the depth of our silent reverence, we realize the truth of the inspired words, “I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.”

As comrade after comrade departs, we march on with our ranks grown thinner. Help us to be faithful to You and to one another. Look in mercy on the surviving spouses and children of our departed comrades, and with Your own tenderness console and comfort those who are bereaved.

Heavenly Father bless our country with freedom, peace and righteousness. Through Your favor may we meet at last before Your throne in Heaven.

(All respond Amen.)”

## **R-14**

(Page 84)

Proposed by Department of California

### **RITUAL**

#### **DEDICATING A MEMORIAL**

Amend Chapter Title - Dedicating A Memorial, Ritual, next to **Chaplain**, by replacing the section with the following:

**“Chaplain:** Almighty God guide these men and women we honor through every day and night. Give them unlimited strength and courage to continue their efforts for lasting peace. Make their victory a true service to all humanity.

Give them growing faith in Your teachings. Make them Your chosen servants to carry on forever a victorious crusade against all evil forces seeking to destroy that which is just and good in the hearts of men and women.

Help them to bring brotherly love to all lands. Bless and comfort those whom they have left bereaved. And, finally, O God, help us to increase our spiritual unity and our love for all. In reverent humility we ask these blessings. Amen.

(All respond – Amen.)

(Chaplain resumes place in ranks. Officer of day brings color bearers and guards to present arms.)”

#### **R-15**

(Page 89)

Proposed by Department of California

#### **RITUAL**

#### **FUNERAL CEREMONIES**

Amend Chapter Title - Funeral Ceremonies, Ritual, under **CHAPEL SERVICE**, next to first **Chaplain**, by replacing the section with the following:

**“Chaplain:** (May extemporize or repeat): "O God, Creator of All, we here extend these final earthly tributes to our beloved comrade. Accept our prayers on behalf of the soul of Your departed servant. Welcome them to Your house to rest in peace. Look with mercy upon the loved ones bereaved by their passing. Comfort and console them through Your own tenderness. These things we ask humbly in Your name. Amen.

(All repeat Amen. Replace caps.)

(A choir, quartet or soloist may sing “Sleep, Soldier Boy” or other appropriate song.)”

Under **COMMITTAL**, replace the section with the following:

#### **“COMMITTAL**

The chaplain or minister in charge will then recite the following committal service:

The Master said: “I am the Resurrection and the Life. Anyone who believes in Me will live, even after dying.” (This paragraph to be used at discretion of Post.) Dust shall be returned to dust and the spirit to God who gave it.

Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust and spirit to spirit that watches over the lives and souls of men and women. Amen.

**All Comrades:** Amen.”

**RITUAL**

**UNSERVICEABLE FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY**

Add new Chapter Title **UNSERVICEABLE FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY** section, Ritual, before Chapter Title **FUNERAL CEREMONIES** as written below:

**“UNSERVICEABLE FLAG RETIREMENT CEREMONY**

(During the ceremony, only one flag should be utilized to symbolize all the flags intended for disposal.)

**Master of Ceremonies:** “Today we have gathered here to pay our last respects to this symbol of our great nation and retire this flag.

The Stars and Stripes was adopted on June 14, 1777, by the Continental Congress. Since then, there have been 27 iterations of this flag but what it stands for has not changed. The US flag has 13 alternating red and white stripes representing the 13 original colonies. Its 50 white stars on a blue field represent the 50 states of our country. The colors of the flag also have meaning – The Red representing valor and bravery, White for purity and innocence, and Blue for vigilance, perseverance, and justice.

Our Nation’s flag has flown in peace and in war. It has been present at more than 100 military conflicts and countless expeditions and deployments around the world to include the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Civil War, Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, The Gulf War, The War on Terror (to include Afghanistan and Iraq). The flag remains a symbol of freedom, liberty, hope, strength, and pride to which Americans pledge their allegiance.”

**Officer of the Day:** “Comrade Commander, I wish to present this flag of our Country for examination and retirement.”

**Commander:** “Comrade Officer of the Day, proceed to the Junior Vice Commander and present the Flag for examination.”

(Officer of the Day will pick up ceremonial flag and will carry it with both arms crossed, held to their chest will move in a uniform manner to the Junior Vice Commander)

(When Officer of the Day arrives with the ceremonial flag, Junior Vice Commander renders a slow salute to the flag)

(Officer of the Day will lower the flag from their chest and present the flag to the Junior Vice Commander)

(Following presentation of the flag to the Junior Vice Commander, the Officer of the Day shall, in turn, render a slow salute)

**Officer of the Day:** “Comrade Junior Vice Commander, I present this flag for your examination. Is this flag no longer a fitting emblem for display?”

(Junior Vice Commander looks down upon the flag)

**Junior Vice Commander:** "It is not, proceed to the Senior Vice Commander

(Officer of the Day will bring the flag back to their chest and move to the Senior Vice Commander)

(Officer of the Day will lower the flag from their chest and present the flag to the Senior Vice Commander)

Both exchange slow salutes as they pass possession of the flag to their counterpart.

(When Officer of the Day arrives with the ceremonial flag, Senior Vice Commander renders a slow salute to the flag)

(Officer of the Day will lower the flag from their chest and present the flag to the Senior Vice Commander)

(Senior Vice Commander looks down upon the flag)

**Officer of the Day:** "Comrade Senior Vice Commander, I present this flag for your examination. Should this flag be destroyed in a dignified manner?"

**Senior Vice Commander:** "Yes, it should. Present this flag to the Commander for final examination and fitting disposal."

(Officer of the Day will bring the flag back to their chest and move to the Commander)

Both exchange slow salutes as they pass possession of the flag to their counterpart.

(When Officer of the Day arrives with the ceremonial flag, Commander renders a slow salute to the flag)

**Officer of the Day:** "Comrade Commander, In accordance with United States Code Title 4, Section 8 (k), when the flag is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning."

**Commander:** "Very well."

**Commander:** "This flag has served its nation long and well. It has been worn to a condition in which it should no longer be used to represent the nation. This flag represents all of the flags collected and being retired from service today. The honor we show here for this one flag, we are showing for all of the flags, even those not physically here."

**Commander:** "Comrade Chaplain, please offer the prayer."

**Chaplain:** "Uncover" "Lord, we thank You for our Country, its flag, and the liberty for which it stands. We humbly ask You to watch over our Servicemembers now serving under our flag. We commit these flags, worn-out in worthy service, to a clean and purging flame. As they yield their substance to the fire, may Thy holy light spread over us, bring warmth to our Prisoners-Of-War, provide a beacon for our Missing-In-Action to be returned home, and bring renewed devotion to God and Country. Amen."

**Chaplain:** "Cover, two"

**Commander:** "We will now commit this flag to the flame and pledge our allegiance to the Flag. Present Arms."

(Officer of the Day moves to the fire then lowers flag and places the flag on the fire.

Steps back and salutes)

(Color Guard presents arms. Post colors are dipped. All officers and members salute.

All in attendance recite the *Pledge of Allegiance*.)

**Commander:** (at conclusion of the Pledge) "Order arms."

**Master of Ceremonies:** "Let us have a moment of silence while the flag burns, reflecting on its significance and the freedoms it represents.

(The Color Guard shall resume its station)

(Color Guard retires and posts colors)

**Master of Ceremonies:** "This concludes our ceremony."

## **R-17**

(Page 116)

Proposed by Department of California

### **RITUAL**

#### **TRIBUTE TO COMRADES - - P.O.W. OR M.I.A.**

Amend Chapter Title - Tribute To Comrades – P.O.W. or M.I.A., Ritual, under third **Chaplain**, by replacing the section with the following:

**"Chaplain:** "Almighty God, we praise You, we glorify You, and we thank You for sparing us from the grasp of our enemies. Grant us full understandings of the suffering being endured by our comrades who are being held as prisoners of war or are still missing."

"We ask Your blessings upon them, that whatever comforts they are denied, whatever evil they must endure may result in their everlasting happiness." "Especially we ask Your support for their loved ones. May Your grace be with them always, giving them the strength to do their daily tasks and the courage to meet the problems of life." "We pray for those missing comrades who have been called to Your arms that whatever justice they have been denied in this life has been granted them a hundredfold. Amen."